

The University of Chicago

ATTITUDES OF SELECTED GROUPS
IN THE UNITED STATES
TOWARD MEXICO
1930-1940

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DECEMBER, 1941

By
JAMES DUNBAR BELL

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the attitudes of certain business groups, the Catholic Church, the largest protestant churches, the principal labor organizations, and the United States Government, toward Mexico during the period from 1930 to 1940. In a sense it might be termed a case study of attempts to influence foreign policy by forming segments of public opinion that would demand changes in policy. The years 1935, 1938, and 1939 marked the most intense efforts to promote a change in the good neighbor policy during the decade under consideration.

During the last months of 1934 and the first half of 1935 the American non-Catholic press and the Congress of the United States displayed more interest in the controversy between Church and State in Mexico than at any other time between 1930 and 1940. The concern over conditions in Mexico was greater than it had been since 1927. The non-ecclesiastical press and the protestant press devoted considerable space to conditions in Mexico and to demands that action be taken to modify Mexican governmental policy. This unusual interest in Mexico and Mexican policy seems to have been, in part at least, the result of demands made by the Catholic Church in the United States.

Protestant periodicals were examined to determine the extent of agreement among Christian sects as to the desirability of action to aid the Catholic Church in its struggle in Mexico. The Catholic periodicals examined maintained that the policy of the Mexican Government was not directed solely at the Catholic Church but constituted an attack on Christianity and was in reality a threat to freedom of religion and therefore of interest to all who believed in such freedom. If this contention were accepted by protestant churches it is highly probable that they would lend support to the Catholic attitude. Protestant sects are not without power in their ability to influence public opinion and it is

probable that in a controversy of this nature their attitude would have some effect on policy making officials.

The expropriation of the property of foreign petroleum companies in March 1938 by President Cárdenas of Mexico again brought Mexico into the headlines. Once more the press of the United States devoted a large amount of space to Mexico and the policies of the Mexican Government. Inasmuch as this action by Mexico was detrimental to the interests of one American business group and might be considered as potentially detrimental to other business interests it was considered relevant to examine the attitude of business toward Mexico.

Because the period under consideration was one in which a reform program, designed to benefit Mexican labor, both agrarian and urban, was instituted in Mexico and because American business groups contended that expropriation was detrimental to the best interests of American labor, it was decided to include the attitudes of organized labor in the United States.

The attitude of the United States Government was examined for the purpose of evaluating the effect, if any, that the demands of these groups had on official attitude toward Mexico.

The period 1930-1940 was chosen for several reasons. During this time the most extensive social reform program ever undertaken in Mexico was initiated. The success or failure of that program depended to some degree on the attitude of the United States Government toward the Government in Mexico which was attempting to carry out the reforms. The Mexican diplomacy of previous administrations indicates that United States policy toward Mexico may have considerable influence on Mexican internal policy. In times of crisis opposition to a foreign policy designed to strengthen inter-American relations is of vital interest. An examination of the attitude of powerful pressure groups toward such a policy may serve a useful purpose.

In determining the sources to be used it was felt that expressions of opinion found in official and semi-official publications would give an indication of the attitude of leaders of the various groups studied. Periodicals not only indicate attitudes but also attempts to influence attitudes. In the instance of business groups there was a dearth of material available in periodicals and those selected represent a majority of the expressions of opinion to be found. The attitude of business interests may

be found in publications not officially related to any particular business organization. Thus periodicals of wide circulation in the business world such as Barrons and the Bankers Magazine were used. Following the expropriation of the oil properties the greatest amount of material issued concerning Mexico by a business group came from the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Thus the publications of this organization were used.

The selection of sources to determine the attitude of the Catholic Church presented a more difficult problem because of the quantity of available material. The Catholic Periodical Index¹ listed some six magazines published in the United States that might be expected to present the Catholic attitude toward Mexico. Of those listed, America and Commonweal were chosen because they gave more consideration to the struggle between Church and State in Mexico than others. In addition it was thought that a diversity of opinion might be obtained as America is a Jesuit periodical considered influential in Catholic circles and Commonweal is considered the liberal journal of Catholicism in the United States. Mexican Martyrdom was chosen because it was one of two full length books on the religious controversy in Mexico to be written by a member of the hierarchy during this period.² Wilfrid Parsons, author of Mexican Martyrdom, is an influential member of the hierarchy and it was believed that an examination of his study would offer an indication of an attitude of a somewhat more official nature than that of the periodicals, inasmuch as Mexican Martyrdom was based in part on information secured from the Archbishop of Mexico, then residing in San Antonio, Texas.

Reports of Conventions and official journals were used to determine the attitude of labor groups. The official attitude was determined by an examination of the utterances of the President and officials of the Department of State as well as an examination of the press releases of that department.

Through the use of these sources it was believed that attitudes might be determined and the intensity of feeling revealed. There is little doubt but that other sources might be suggested,

¹Laurence A. Leavey (ed.), The Catholic Periodical Index 1930-1933 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1939).

²Wilfrid Parsons, Mexican Martyrdom (New York: The McMillan Company, 1936).

however, a careful canvas of expressions of attitude lead to the belief that the contents of those sources examined were in general representative. When it was necessary to examine a great mass of material, selection was made on the basis of the frequency with which an attitude appeared and the intensity of the attitude. Intensity was judged on the basis of conventional reaction to highly contentious symbols. When symbols that tend to provoke an immediate and violent reaction were used it was felt that the attitude was intense.

The determination of policy in a democracy depends to a considerable degree on public opinion. Policy making officials, if they wish to remain in power, cannot long ignore the demands of large groups of citizens wishing to influence policy. The failure of the United States to join the League of Nations or associate itself with the Permanent Court of International Justice may be attributed in part to the temper of public opinion when these matters were being considered by legislative authority.¹ One technique for influencing policy is to be found in the creation of a public opinion that will demand the desired changes in policy. This may be done directly by instigating a barrage of letters and telegrams directed at legislators or indirectly by molding an attitude that will reject action considered undesirable by the interest attempting to influence opinion. Through the use of conventional channels of communication a segment of opinion may be influenced to such an extent that a considerable body of individuals will develop a conditioned reaction upon being confronted with certain symbols. If symbols habitually associated with a state are constantly presented to a group within another state in a manner to provoke a negative reaction it is probable that in time the symbols thus presented will themselves take on a negative connotation. There is, for example, reason to believe that the symbol Nazi has a negative connotation in the opinion of many citizens of the United States.

Interstate relations based on policies that are influenced by special interest pressure groups may not be conducive to the attainment of justice or peace. Assuming the desideratum of foreign policy to be the attainment of these two objectives it is

¹Quincy Wright, "Dilemmas for a Post War World," Free World, I (October, 1941), 16.

the purpose of this study to examine the attitudes fostered by selected groups in the United States toward Mexico. By such an examination it is hoped to determine the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the policy of the United States toward Mexico and the changes in that policy desired by these groups. If change is desired, are the objectives of the new policy peace and justice or is it designed to serve the special interests of the group recommending it? Is there an attempt to misinform for the purpose of creating an attitude that would be useful in directing policy toward the ends desired by special interests?

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Expropriation Issue

As might be expected a considerable part of the publications of the Standard Oil Company, in regard to Mexico, dealt with the expropriation of the property of the petroleum interests. During 1939 and 1940 this American corporation published twelve pamphlets¹ that were concerned, almost exclusively, with the question of expropriation. Not only were pertinent arguments in regard to the legality of the act presented but citation of legal authority and liberal quotation from diplomatic correspondence were included. The course of the negotiations between the oil companies and the Mexican Government was outlined, subsoil rights, diplomatic protection, the justice of the Mexican action, Mexico's ability to pay and possible methods of solution of the problem were all discussed in these pamphlets. Decisions of the Mexican Supreme Court and contentions of the Mexican Foreign Office were examined and the results "refuted."

The Company's presentation of its case was thorough and strong. The accepted principles of international law require prompt payment for property expropriated. The Mexican Government was unable to make such payment. Mexico's contention that payment would be made at some time in the future with no definite time or manner specified, probably would not be upheld before an international tribunal. There is also little likelihood that a judicial or arbitral court would give much weight to the Mexican contention that municipal law required expropriation in spite of the inability of the state to immediately reimburse the companies.

¹They are: Whose Oil Is It, Diplomatic Protection, They Took what They Wanted, The Fine Art of Squeezing, Empty Promises, The Solution for the Mexican Confiscation, Donald Richberg's Story: The Mexican Oil Seizure, Investments and Trade, Confiscation or Expropriation?, Present Status of the Mexican Oil "Expropriations," 1940, The Reply to Mexico, and Denials of Justice. All published in New York.

Under the accepted principles of international law the Standard Oil Company was in a strong position, but the Company was reluctant to rest with a statement of the legal principles involved. Instead of being content with a defense of its position from the viewpoint of international law the Company continued to use every means at its disposal to vilify the government of a friendly state. Mexico was pictured as being the epitome of all that is bad in government.

The attitude of the Catholic Church toward the policy of expropriation was mixed. At the time of the expropriation an article in Commonweal defended the action¹ while an opposite position was taken by America.² Church publications in the United States did not devote much space to the controversy between the Mexican Government and the oil companies although the Church in Mexico aided the Government in raising money to reimburse the petroleum interests.³ There was an apparent lack of co-operation between these two groups in regard to attitude toward Mexico although America published two articles by a former employee of the Standard Oil Company that presented views similar to those expressed elsewhere by the company.

These articles presented the main lines of legal argument used by the Standard Oil Company as well as quotation from State Department notes to Mexico.⁴ The effect on the reader was that the Church was not alone in the ill treatment it received at the hands of the Mexican Government. The reader was led to believe that the Mexican people were being denied the benefits of foreign enterprise and initiative as well as the benefits of Roman Catholic Christianity. The malevolence of the Mexican Government was emphasized by demonstrating that it was unjust in its treatment of other benefactors as well as the Church. The articles did not go into the legal aspects of the expropriations as thoroughly as

¹Randall Pond, "The Mexican Crisis," Commonweal, XXVIII (August 5, 1938), 387.

²America, LIX (April 9, 1938), 13.

³Randall Pond, "The Mexican Crisis," op. cit., p. 387.

⁴Edward B. Lyman, "Mexico Holds the Oil But Americans Hold the Claim," ibid., LXIII (June 8, 1940), 228, and Edward B. Lyman, "Mexico Stalls on Just Oil Settlement," ibid., LXIII (June 15, 1940), 260.

the pamphlets issued by the Standard Oil Company but placed more emphasis on the similarity of the position of the Church and the plight of the petroleum companies.

Protestant publications paid very little attention to the expropriation of the oil properties but those that expressed an opinion tended to support the contentions of the Mexican Government.¹ The two major labor organizations in the United States made no direct comment specifically on the expropriations but the C. I. O. News declared that the enemies of reform in Mexico were the enemies of Labor in the United States thus tacitly endorsing the Mexican action.² The Locomotive Engineers Journal did not comment on the expropriation of the oil properties but did disapprove of expropriation in general.³

In discussions of expropriation the four groups under consideration displayed an interest and an attitude directly related to the effect that such action might be expected to have on the particular group analyzing Mexican policy. Thus the Standard Oil Company displayed a more intense attitude on this issue and published more material concerning this issue than any other group. Articles published by the church tended to create the opinion that the Mexican Government was unjust, not only to the Church, but also to other interests. In general, labor and the protestant churches failed to support the contention of the Standard Oil Company that Mexico was to be condemned for its policy of expropriation. No protestant periodical examined favored a change in policy toward Mexico because of the expropriation. These religious periodicals evidenced considerable interest in the struggle between Church and State in Mexico but the controversy between foreign commercial interests and the Mexican Government aroused almost no interest. In publications not interested in promoting attitudes it seems logical that interest center around only those policies which have a direct effect on the group directing such publications. In the instance of the publications of the Catholic Church attitudes were expressed toward many aspects of Mexican

¹Brent Dow Allison, "Oil on the Troubled Gulf," Christian Century, LV (August 7, 1938), 985.

²C. I. O. News, August 18, 1941, p. 7.

³Locomotive Engineers Journal, LXXI (November, 1937), 880.

governmental policy and was not confined to those which had a direct bearing on the functioning of the Church in Mexico.

The Religious and Educational Issues

The same lack of co-operation that characterized the attitude of the Standard Oil Company and the Catholic Church toward the Mexican policy of expropriation was also to be found in the attitude of these two groups toward the religious and educational policies of the Mexican Government. The Church displayed an intense dislike for these policies and devoted considerable space to a discussion of them but in its broad attack on Mexico, the Standard Oil Company failed to take a forthright stand in defense of the Catholic attitude.

The Church publications referred to in the course of this study emphasized the suffering of members of the hierarchy and Catholic laymen as a result of the Government's religious policy. Atrocity stories were numerous and complaints that traditional privileges had been denied the Church were iterated and reiterated. The seizure of Church property and the secularization of education were given as evidence of the iniquity of the Government's policy. However, the contentions of the Government that the Church was in a dominant political position at a time when the mass of the Mexican people were ill fed, ill housed, ill clothed, and illiterate were not answered. Practically no attempt was made to answer the government's charges of past opposition of the Church to liberal or progressive movements. The Church claimed that the educational program of the government was designed to create an atheistic population. The attempts of the Mexican Government to lower the incidence of illiteracy were condemned as atheistic and communistic but little attempt was made to answer the contention that the rate of illiteracy was at its highest when education was in the hands of the Church. In one instance illiteracy was condoned as a not wholly undesirable condition.¹

This position of complete and vehement opposition to the religious and education programs of the Mexican Government was not supported by the Standard Oil Company or other business publications. In reference to the deviation of Mexican political

¹Wilfrid Parsons, "Democratic Mexico," America, XLIV (March 21, 1931), 571.

ideology from the democratic norm Standard Oil indicated that the educational policy of the Mexican Government was radical but no sweeping denunciation was made. The publications of the Standard Oil Company did not devote space to a discussion of the religious controversy in Mexico. Again it appears that interest centered around those policies of the Mexican Government which had, or which might be expected to have, an effect on the group expressing the attitude. Thus the Standard Oil Company confined itself largely to a consideration of expropriation and the alleged radical economic and political policies of the Mexican Government that might be expected to have a detrimental effect on foreign capital.

Because of the diversity of opinion expressed it is difficult to arrive at valid generalizations concerning the attitude of non-Catholic ecclesiastical groups toward Mexico. Most denominational periodicals displayed considerable confusion and inability to explain their attitude. In some instances the pleasure experienced due to the additional opportunities offered to protestant sects by the anti-Catholic attitude of the Mexican Government was ill-disguised. Several denominational publications displayed an attitude of goodwill toward the Mexican Government that seemed to be based in large part on the hope that the religious policy would provide wider opportunities for missionary work by their churches.¹

Nearly all periodicals examined agreed that the role of the Church as oppressor and representative of reactionary interests was the primary cause of the anti-religious attitude of the Mexican Government. However, they did not agree as to whether the attitude of the Church was ample justification for the action of the Government.

Neither was the attitude of protestant publications consistent toward Mexican educational policy. Some believed that Mexico was trying to eliminate all religion through its educational policy² while others had praise for the attempts to lower the incidence of illiteracy.³ The interest of these publications was

¹The Baptist Standard, XLVII (February 8, 1935), 1.

²Living Church, XCI (August 11, 1934), 205.

³Juan W. Pascoe, "Religion in Mexico Today," Zion's Herald, CXVIII (April 17, 1935), 374.

primarily in the religious policy, and the educational program was discussed only in its relation to the Mexican attitude toward religion and Catholicism.

The only labor group that specifically mentioned educational policy, the American Federation of Labor, lauded attempts of Latin American countries to decrease the high percentage of illiteracy. Other labor groups made no mention of educational policy.

No labor publication of national importance examined made any mention of the religious struggle in Mexico but the American Federation of Labor stated that religious liberty existed in Mexico in 1939. Labor did not support the Catholic attitude toward these policies of the Mexican Government.

The Ideological Issue

In writing of political ideology and of individuals in Mexico the Church and the Standard Oil Company were in substantial agreement. Both condemned modern leaders and radicalism while praising past conservative administrations. In respect to these two phases of the attack on Mexico the writings of Nicholas Roosevelt were in general of a similar nature. The attitude of other business groups as indicated by the magazines examined show a growing fear of radicalism late in 1934 and 1935. Protestant publications on occasion indicated a fear of radicalism in Mexico but the majority of such publications examined did not display great concern over charges of communism and other non-democratic ideologies, nor did this group indulge in attack on individuals. Labor groups took a view of the situation in Mexico almost directly contrary to that of business and the Church. The A. F. of L. maintained that totalitarianism had no hold in Mexico¹ and the C. I. O. had praise for some of the individuals attacked by the Church.²

In discussing the deviation from democratic political ideology and morality writers for Catholic and Standard Oil publications have displayed a confused, contradictory point of view. In general, Mexico has been referred to as non-democratic but no

¹Report of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor (Washington: Ransdell, Inc., 1940), p. 671.

²C. I. O. News, September 17, 1938, p. 4.

consistency is evident in the many attempts to arrive at a classification of the political theory of the Mexican Government. The confusion and the lack of precise terms and valid evidence leads the writer to believe that there was little real effort to determine the political orientation of the Mexican Government. Rather, it seems that charges of radicalism were used as epithets for the purpose of influencing attitudes and molding opinion.

In writing of individuals, the Catholic desideratum seems to have been the discussion of these leaders for the purpose of influencing attitude and making preferences explicit rather than arriving at factual conclusions as to individual political faith. Adjectives designed to elicit an "anti" attitude applied to individuals without supporting evidence is a propaganda technique referred to by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis as "name calling." Reference to Mexican political leaders as brigands, gangsters, bolshevists, exploiters, reds, and fascists are largely unsupported and when evidence is marshalled to prove the validity of such charges it is usually meager. It is not easy to disprove some of the charges but it is correct to state that most of them are not proven. The effect of such descriptions of Mexicans seems to be the creation of an anti-Mexican attitude. The desire to achieve that purpose appears to have obscured the necessity of demonstrating the validity of the charges made.

The tendency to apply symbols of admiration to leaders who do not enjoy high respect in the eyes of Mexicans who support the revolutionary ideals is indicative of the position of the Church on the social questions which the revolution sought to solve.¹ The Church has condemned the leaders of liberal movements and has had little but praise for the opponents of those who have tried to improve on the old order.

This attack by Standard Oil and the Church is made in the name of upholding the principles of law and justice. Is law and justice served by a vitriolic attack which spreads misconceptions concerning a friendly neighboring state? It is difficult to perceive how these groups have contributed to better international understanding. Misconceptions concerning Mexico can only be augmented by such publications as these. Those leaders in Latin

¹Randall Pond, "Juarez and Diaz," Commonweal, XXIX (March 17, 1939), 569-70.

America who already think of the United States as the Colossus of the North can only be strengthened in that belief after reading propaganda of this nature. A Latin-American leader who believes the statement in the preface of Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion¹ that the opinions therein are the opinions of the nation can hardly fail to be disillusioned over the prospects for a fruition of the good neighbor policy.

Statements of a patently propagandistic nature presented in behalf of a case already well supported by law cannot contribute to better international understanding. The Standard Oil Company, in the interest of private profit, has attempted to undermine the public good.

Aspects of the Mexican reform program other than the religious and educational policy were said by the Church and the Standard Oil Company to be radical and were invariably presented as failing to achieve their objectives. The labor and agrarian programs were attacked. But again the attitude of Standard Oil and the Church did not receive the support of labor and the protestant churches. Neither group displayed sufficient interest in these policies to devote more than passing attention to them.

The attitude of the Church and the Standard Oil Company toward Government policy other than the educational and religious programs seems to consist largely of statements of opinion without adequate documentation. The writings of spokesmen for these groups are in great part polemical and often characterized by such adjectives as gangsterism, brigandage and Insullism.² The use of such terms does not result in a clarification of issues. The ejidal and labor programs of the Mexican Government are condemned without supporting evidence of their failure.³ The relation of these programs to the religious controversy is so slight as to lend suspicion to the motives of Catholic writers who attack them. The lack of consistency and especially the contradictory viewpoints expressed on the question of the oil expropriations by Catholic writers indicate a use of varied interpretation of

¹Burt McConnell, Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion (New York: Mail and Express Publishing Company, 1939).

²America, LIV (February 15, 1936), 417.

³Thomas S. Hunter, "Mexican Facts, American Duties," ibid., LV (September 12, 1936), 532.

similar programs at differing periods for the purpose of forming opinion. The changing of attitudes toward individuals and policies with the changing intensity of the religious controversy is an indication of a desire to mold opinion rather than a desire to examine the facts of the Mexican Governmental program.

Attitudes Toward the Good Neighbor Policy

Catholic and Standard Oil publications were in complete agreement that the policy of the good neighbor toward Mexico was not desirable. In this attitude Nicholas Roosevelt, writing for the National Foreign Trade Council, concurred.¹ Not only was the policy of non-intervention attacked as weak but all three agreed that Ambassador Daniels was not competent. Neither protestant nor labor groups supported the demands for a stronger policy. Protestant church publications, with one exception, opposed congressional investigation of conditions in Mexico while labor groups made no comment on demands for such an investigation. Thus in spite of some support by the protestant sects of Catholic attitudes no protestant church favored action beyond verbal protest.

The Catholic Church has disapproved of American policy toward Mexico during the past ten years.² Opposition to the good neighbor policy has been outspoken but Catholic publications have constantly maintained that they do not favor intervention. They state that their opposition to the good neighbor policy is due to their belief that there should be no intervention. It is their contention that the arms embargo and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse with the Calles and Cárdenas Governments were a form of intervention. Non-intervention seems to mean the support by the United States Government of the faction in Mexico favored by the Church. Disapproval of the policy of the American State Department in regard to Mexico is usually associated with some aspect of Mexican Governmental policy thought to be unpopular with the American public.³ Thus a description of atrocities and radical legislation is often followed with a statement to the effect

¹Nicholas Roosevelt, Wanted: Good Neighbors (New York: National Foreign Trade Council, Inc., 1939), pp. 47-48.

²America, LIV (October 12, 1935), 4.

³Ibid., LXII (January 13, 1940), 379.

that this is the kind of government receiving the support of the United States. An official of the United States who commends rather than rebukes the Mexican Government for its social legislation is sure to incur the enmity of Catholic publications.¹ Cessation of a friendly attitude toward Mexico and of the good neighbor policy are demanded because the Church disapproves of the internal policy of that country. The Church demands that the United States exert diplomatic and economic pressure on Mexico to force her to make fundamental changes in her policy of social reform which in effect would result in a return to conditions as they existed before 1910 and the elimination of most of the gains made since that time.

Correspondents agree that the seizure of the oil properties was an extremely popular action in Mexico. The restoration of these properties would be a political disaster for the present liberal government in Mexico. Such a move might indeed be the end of the reform movement. Yet the most insistent demand of the Standard Oil Company is for immediate and full restitution.

Various solutions to this controversy have been offered by the Church and Standard Oil. They narrow down to a choice between complete and immediate restitution of the properties and privileges lost or the use of coercion, preferably economic but possibly military, by the United States. The first alternative, that of a return to pre-Cárdenas conditions is from the viewpoint of the Mexican Government, politically impossible and from the viewpoint of the welfare of the Mexican peon is probably undesirable. It is not undesirable because such action in itself would be especially detrimental to the oil worker but rather because it might cause a disruption of great proportions in Mexico that would tend to obviate the gains already made and deter the entire social program of the Mexican government.

The second alternative, the use of coercion either economic or military, might have the result desired by the Church and the Standard Oil Company. International law would be preserved, Standard Oil would get its property and the Church would regain its privileges, but in order to accomplish this objective a change from a liberal reforming government to a government similar to that of Díaz would be necessary. Mexico at the Bar of Public

¹Ibid., LI (August 25, 1934), 485.

Opinion¹ refers to the Díaz regime as the golden era of Mexico. The return to some such "sane" administration is the desiderata of Church and oil company. Such an administration would probably solve no long-run problems. There is little doubt that, with the backing of the State Department, such an administration could be maintained, at least temporarily. It seems highly improbable, however, that such a move would eliminate the desire for freedom from foreign control or the desire for reform which has been displayed by Mexicans during the past thirty years. To go back to 1910 will not solve the problems of the present.

The proposals of the Church for the solution of its controversy with the Government of Mexico seem to be largely designed to influence public opinion in the United States. Some of them are frankly offered for this purpose,² others are ostensibly presented for the purpose of settling the controversy.³ The latter were found to be of such a nature that the ultimate effect would be a strong public sentiment in favor of the Catholic attitude toward the struggle rather than an agreement with the Mexican Government. None of these suggested plans take cognizance of what the Mexican Government considers the basis of the controversy, i.e., that the Church has used its power over the illiterate masses to hinder and impede every attempt at progressive social legislation designed to improve the status of the mass of the people. Instead of refuting this charge the Church has condemned Mexican leaders as Communist and their program as a failure. Writings of Mexico in the Catholic press have not dealt with the real issue. The conclusion seems to be unavoidable that these writings have been designed to have an indirect influence on American foreign policy which might place the United States on the side of the hierarchy in the Mexican controversy and force a return to a Mexico dominated by the Roman Catholic Church.

It may be concluded from the material cited in this study that the publications of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey

¹Burt McConnell, Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion, op. cit.

²James A. Magner, "Publicity for Mexico," Commonweal, LLI (February 15, 1935), 443.

³Paul V. Murray, "A Plan for Mexico," ibid., XXI (March 29, 1935), 615.

and the Catholic Church tend to produce a hostile attitude toward Mexico. Such an attitude might be expected to build a public opinion that would demand a "strong" policy on the part of the United States State Department.

The implications of such a policy, if carried to the extent that seems to be desired have been discussed. They are: first, the elimination of the good neighbor policy; second, the elimination of the social reform program of the Mexican Government; and third, the rigid maintenance of current principles of international law as they apply to expropriation. The present administration in the United States seems to believe that the maintenance of the Mexican reform program and the good neighbor policy is of more importance than maintenance of these principles of international law by forceful methods. Such an attitude is not appeasement in the current sense of that much maligned term. This is a rational attitude in view of the present world conditions. In times of dynamic changes in the world order and social and economic theory, international law cannot remain static. A new basis of relationship between capital exporting and capital importing states must be evolved if peace and justice are to be maintained.

Without exception, all protestant publications examined refused to give complete support to the demands of the Church and the Standard Oil Company. Some periodicals approved of protests but none were willing to accept the proposal for an investigation by the United States Government.

The degree of protest in which each church was willing to participate seemed to vary directly with the intensity of dislike for the Catholic Church. Those church publications which expressed their distaste for Catholicism in the strongest terms were less willing to engage in any action designed to create an anti-Mexican attitude than others which were not as concerned about the iniquity of the Catholic Church.

More than half of the protestant periodicals examined lent support to the Catholic viewpoint by indicating their rejection of the anti-religious policy of the Mexican Government but many of these were unwilling to give complete support to the contentions of the Church. One important respect in which these protestant publications differed from the Catholic periodicals studied was in their expressions of attitude toward the reform movement as a

whole. The entire movement was condemned by the Catholic press. The Mexican Government was referred to as Fascist, Communist, and Socialist but most of the protestant publications examined limited their condemnation to the religious policy and the educational policy and in some instances the educational policy was praised. The fact that many of these periodicals devoted comment almost exclusively to the religious policy of the Mexican Government indicates that they were not primarily interested in developing a large body of anti-Mexican opinion by appealing to the prejudices of the American public over as wide a field as Catholic periodicals. Their interest was in a presentation of opinion of the religious struggle and little attempt was made to investigate other aspects of Mexican policy or politicians. When comment did appear concerning Mexico, on topics other than the religious or educational policies, it was usually commendatory.

Although the attitude of labor organizations in the United States toward Mexico has by no means been consistent both of the two largest groups of organized labor in the United States have indicated their sympathy with the reform movement of the Cárdenas Government. The A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. have given tacit approval of the good neighbor policy and both have expressed hostility toward groups which have attacked the reforms of the Mexican Government.¹ These two organizations have not been willing to accept the indictment of the Mexican Government by Church and business groups and have expressed attitudes which would indicate their desire to create a "pro-Mexico" opinion. In spite of the dearth of material to be found on the attitude of American labor toward Mexico the majority of articles, editorials, and resolutions examined indicate sympathy with Mexico and the Mexican and a desire to strengthen the ties between the working classes of the two countries.

The attitudes expressed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers were more mixed and tended to vary considerably from time to time. Practically no expression of attitude toward the Mexican Government and its policy on a basis of the entire social reform program was found. Comment on specific incidents and ac-

¹Report of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor (Washington: Ransdell, Inc., 1940), p. 671, and C. I. O. News, September 17, 1938, p. 4.

tions usually contained tacit approval or disapproval but seldom a direct condemnation such as is to be found in the expressions of the Church. There was less editorialization to be found in the writings on Mexico in the Locomotive Engineers Journal than in any other source examined. Such editorialization as did appear seemed to be slightly weighted on the anti-Mexican side especially after the expropriation of the oil properties and the assumption of control of railways by the labor movement. However, the attitudes of this group as expressed in their official journal, were less vigorous and vitriolic than the attitudes expressed by any other group under consideration. The appeals, if they may be called such, seemed to be somewhat more reasoned and less emotional than those of the Church or of business groups.

The Official Attitude

The official attitude of the United States Government toward Mexico during the period from 1930 to 1940 has, in general, been exceedingly cordial. With the exception of the notes to Mexico following the expropriation of the property of American oil companies¹ and the suspension of the silver buying policy of the United States Treasury,² this country has acted in a spirit of friendliness and co-operation. While the notes were phrased in strong language, the tone of hostility did not continue over a long period and subsequent actions have indicated a reversion to a friendly attitude. The successful stand against Congressional pressure to take a less friendly attitude on two occasions³ is indicative of a determination to maintain cordial relations and eschew intervention. The anti-imperialistic attitude, implicit in the good neighbor policy, has characterized the relations between Mexico and the United States during the past ten years. The attempts of the Catholic Church to force a change in this attitude in 1935 was a failure. The attempt of the Standard Oil

¹Department of State Press Releases, XIX (July 23, 1938), 51; (August 27, 1938), 145-49; (November 19, 1938), 340-342.

²Ibid., XVIII (April 2, 1938), 425.

³Resolutions in 1935 by Senator Borah and Representative Higgins for investigation of Mexico. Resolutions in 1939 by Representative Martin J. Kennedy for investigation of Mexico and recall of Ambassador Daniels.

Company to effect a change resulted only in a strong tone in notes to Mexico and the suspension of the silver buying policy. The firm attitude in diplomatic correspondence had an excellent basis in international law. It did not mean a retreat from the policy of the good neighbor.

Cause and Effects of Attitudes

These conclusions as to the attitudes of the groups studied indicate that all appear to foster an opinion that will serve to further special interests. The Roman Catholic Church desired to create an anti-Mexican attitude with the hope that a large body of such opinion might aid in influencing the United States Government to change its policy toward Mexico.¹ The Standard Oil Company and the National Foreign Trade Council seemed also to be interested in the creation of an opinion that would favor a modification of, or rejection of, the good neighbor policy. The protestant attitude indicates a willingness to co-operate in the creation of such an opinion on the part of some Churches but rejects suggestions that Congressional action be used as a technique of developing such an opinion. Disapprobation of Catholic policies in Mexico and the hope of new opportunities for adding to their own strength seems to have dominated the decisions of many protestant editors. Labor differs from these three in that it had no direct vested interest that was either threatened or strengthened by action on the part of the Mexican Government. The suggestion by business that American labor would suffer from the lack of a firm attitude on the part of the United States Government toward Mexico was not accepted by the two largest labor organizations in the United States. Labor supported the good neighbor policy.

The policy of non-interference was not accepted by the Church or the business interests studied. While both disclaimed any desire to return to a policy of armed intervention, the hope for "a big stick" policy was but thinly veiled. The groups favoring a change did not merely present evidence of the justness of their contentions in their controversies with the Mexican Government.

In a state in which there is freedom of expression, pres-

¹James A. Magner, "Publicity for Mexico," Commonweal, XXI (February 15, 1935), 443.

sure groups may create attitudes designed to influence policy for special interests, with little or no reference to the effect of such policy on the well being of the state. The evidence presented here indicates that the Roman Catholic Church, the National Foreign Trade Council, and the Standard Oil Company were engaged in such an effort when their interests were threatened. These efforts were in large part unsuccessful.

If the conclusion that these groups were attempting to influence policy for special interests is correct, it would seem essential that, for the purpose of assuring policy designed to preserve justice and peace, some technique of combating such influence be devised. If, as Lasswell believes,¹ the answer to such propaganda is counter propaganda, it would appear that in the interest of a policy devoted to the common good, some means of informing the public of the basis and meaning of policy, other than the propaganda of special interests, is essential. Such means now exist but if policy is not be greatly influenced by special interests they must be strengthened.

If the good relations now existing between the United States and the republics of Latin America are to continue it is essential that the public should not rely to a large extent on the views of special interest groups for the development of attitudes toward foreign states and American foreign policy. Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Sayre has described the dangers of a policy that is greatly influenced by special interest groups.

What beclouds international relations is in most cases not inherent ill will or racial hatreds, or even national prejudices. In the greater number of cases the cause of international frictions and troubles is traceable to the selfishness, not of an entire nation but of small organized groups determined to gain their ends and possessed of sufficient political power to force their will upon party leaders or legislators.

It was in large part the influence of pressure groups bent upon selfish gains and immediate profit that led more than once to our interference in the internal affairs of our Central and South American sister republics, finally resulting in armed intervention and the sowing of fear and deep-seated resentment that could not be forgotten. It was not dislike of North American people but fear of North American guns which

¹Harold Dwight Lasswell, "Propaganda," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, XII (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), 521.

lay at the root of much South American bitterness.¹

In spite of the successful resistance of the Roosevelt Administration to these pressures the danger has not been eliminated and vigilance must be maintained to prevent our foreign policy from being used as the tool of selfish interests.

It is not thought that this study has revealed any startling information concerning the attitudes of business, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Churches or labor toward Mexico. The literate public probably has been cognizant of the general attitudes held by these groups. The purpose rather has been to present evidence of these attitudes and to relate these opinions to the attitude of the United States Government. It is also hoped that the compilation of this evidence gives some clue as to the types of appeal made in the effort to gain the support of public opinion.

¹Francis B. Sayre, "Our New Pan American Policy," Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Institute of Public Affairs of Southern Methodist University (Dallas: Arnold Foundation, Southern Methodist University, 1936), p. 182.

